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ABSTRACT

Summarizes findings from the annual survey of Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) graduates regarding their development of the general education skills and affective attributes outlined in the college mission (e.g., interpersonal growth, appreciation for diversity, etc.). The survey includes measures of mission effectiveness based on graduates' self-assessments of the progress they made regarding specific objectives while enrolled at the institution. One survey question asked students to reflect on their level of accomplishment with respect to the educational objectives they set for themselves at CCP. The survey results revealed that most graduates (81%) achieved their educational objectives in full. The survey then asked respondents to indicate their level of progress on 19 specific goals (e.g., improved oral communication skills, scientific reasoning abilities, and self-confidence). A factor analysis of responses to these goal statement items revealed two distinct clusters (general education and affective attributes) that address the college's mission statement. The remainder of the document presents detailed findings related to the distribution of responses on survey items. According to the authors, the survey findings support the assertion that the college is effectively providing students with opportunities to enact the mission of the institution and that those benefits are apparent regardless of the graduate's degree path. (RC)

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# COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

***The Progress of 2001 Graduates of Community College of Philadelphia in Development of General Education Skills and Affective Attributes***

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Introduction

The Graduate Survey has been structured to enable assessment of the degree to which the College's graduates have achieved their educational objectives. Recently released Institutional Research reports have documented the degree to which graduates achieved their employment and transfer objectives.[1] Since the College's Mission also commits the institution to creating an environment that encourages students to achieve interpersonal growth, an appreciation for diversity, intellectual curiosity, reasoning skills, the ability to communicate, and community involvement, this report considers goal accomplishment relative to the development of general education skills and affective attributes such as these.

The information that is used to evaluate the College's effectiveness with respect to these aspects of its mission was gathered through the annual survey of CCP graduates. This survey has a response rate of approximately 40%. Measures of mission effectiveness are based on graduates' self-assessments of the progress they made on objectives while enrolled at the College. For example, at the start of the questionnaire, graduates are asked the global question, *Have you accomplished the educational objectives you set for yourself at CCP?* By and large, graduates accomplished their objectives (Table 1). Most graduates achieved their educational objectives in full while a handful indicated they did not accomplish their objectives.

[1] These reports are available on the Institutional Research website (www.ccp.edu/VPFIN-PL/ir/reports_available_on.htm).

**Table 1**

**Accomplishment of Educational Objectives**
**2001 Graduates**

| Level of Accomplishment | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Fully | 295 | 81.0 |
| Partly | 66 | 18.1 |
| Not accomplished | 3 | 0.8 |
| Total | 364 | 100.0 |

Table 2 contains a list of 19 goals that were included as part of the questionnaire item that asked graduates to indicate *the level of progress made on each goal while at the College*. The following four-point response scale was provided for this item: 1) considerable progress, 2) some progress, 3) little progress, and 4) no progress.

**Table 2**
**General Education Goals and Affective Attributes**
**Included on Graduate Survey**

1. Improved my oral communication skills
2. Improved my written communication skills
3. Improved my quantitative reasoning skills
4. Improved my scientific reasoning skills
5. Improved my ability to critically evaluate ideas

6. Developed an interest or openness to new ideas
7. Enhanced my ability to work as part of a group
8. Developed interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others
9. Enhanced my understanding of my own and different cultures
10. Improved my leadership abilities
11. Developed meaningful career goals
12. Enhanced my self-confidence
13. Improved my self-reliance
14. Improved my self-discipline
15. Improved my preparation for active participation in community activities
16. Preparation for continued personal and intellectual growth after college
17. Developed into a more informed citizen

18. Improved my ability to use internet and online resources effectively

19. Enhanced my ability to express myself artistically

A factor analysis indicated there were two clusters on which 17 of the 19 goals loaded. Items 1 through 5, which define one of the clusters, appear to comprise a general education factor while items 6 through 17, which define the second factor, represent affective attributes that address issues in the College's Mission Statement. Items 18 and 19 are items that statistically did not cluster with the other goals.

General Education Goals

Table 3 contains the distribution of responses to the goals that represent the General Education cluster. As a group, graduates made significant progress across the five general education goals. Between 42% and 59% of all graduates reported they made considerable progress in all five areas and another 36% to 45% made some progress on these goals while enrolled at the College.

**Table 3**
**Progress on General Education Goals Reported by 2001 Graduates**

| General Education Goals | Considerable Progress (%) | Some Progress (%) | Little Progress (%) | No Progress (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improved my oral communication skills | 49.3 | 41.5 | 6.7 | 2.5 |
| Improved my written communication skills | 58.7 | 36.0 | 4.5 | 0.8 |
| Improved my quantitative reasoning skills | 48.9 | 42.7 | 6.5 | 2.0 |
| Improved my scientific reasoning skills | 42.0 | 43.4 | 10.1 | 4.5 |
| Improved my ability to critically evaluate ideas | 47.2 | 45.3 | 4.5 | 3.1 |

Responses to two of the general education goals stand out from the rest. Compared with the other general education goals, graduates appear to have made more progress in terms of *improved written communication skills* and slightly less progress in the area of *improved scientific reasoning skills*.

Affective Attribute Goals

Table 4 contains the distribution of responses to the goals that represent the Affective Attributes cluster. In general, graduates reported making slightly more progress across the goals in the affective characteristics cluster than across the goals in the general education cluster. Between 52% and 58% of all graduates reported they made considerable progress in most of the affective areas and another 33% to 39% made some progress on these goals while enrolled at the College. Among these goals, graduates reported making slightly more progress in terms of preparation *for continued personal and intellectual growth after college* than in the other areas.

Responses to two of the affective goals were quite different form the other goals. Graduates reported considerably less progress in terms of *improved leadership abilities* and *improved preparation for active participation in community activities.*

**Table 4**
**Progress on Affective Characteristics Goals Reported by 2001 Graduates**

| Affective Attribute Goals | Considerable Progress (%) | Some Progress (%) | Little Progress (%) | No Progress (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Developed an interest or openness to new ideas | 54.1 | 36.9 | 5.4 | 3.7 |
| Enhanced my ability to work as part of a group | 52.6 | 35.7 | 7.8 | 3.9 |
| Developed interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others | 54.8 | 33.9 | 8.8 | 2.5 |
| Enhanced my understanding of my own and different cultures | 52.4 | 34.6 | 9.0 | 3.9 |
| Improved my leadership abilities | 43.7 | 40.0 | 11.0 | 5.4 |
| Developed meaningful career goals | 55.9 | 33.1 | 7.3 | 3.7 |
| Enhanced my self-confidence | 52.5 | 38.8 | 5.6 | 3.1 |
| Improved my self-reliance | 53.5 | 37.0 | 5.6 | 3.9 |
| Improved my self-discipline | 51.9 | 39.0 | 5.7 | 3.4 |
| Improved my preparation for active participation in community activities | 36.7 | 36.2 | 16.7 | 10.5 |
| Preparation for continued personal and intellectual growth after college | 58.4 | 34.4 | 3.9 | 3.4 |
| Developed into a more informed citizen | 52.8 | 34.8 | 8.1 | 4.2 |

Other Goals

The information in Table 5 contains responses to the two remaining goals that did not load onto the two factors represented in the preceding tables. Compared with other areas of student development, both of these goals reflect areas of lesser progress for the College's graduates. Approximately one-quarter of graduates reported they made little or no progress in terms of *enhanced ability to express themselves artistically* or *improved ability to use the Internet and online resources effectively*.

**Table 5**
**Progress on Goals Reported by 2001 Graduates**

| **Other Goals** | **Considerable progress (%)** | **Some Progress (%)** | **Little Progress (%)** | **No Progress (%)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improved my ability to use internet and online resources effectively | 38.0 | 36.8 | 15.0 | 10.2 |
| Enhanced my ability to express myself artistically | 36.3 | 34.6 | 16.3 | 12.7 |

Comparisons Across Degree Type

Reported progress was compared for two groups of graduates based on the nature of the degree they were awarded. Initially, three groups were formed: 1) Associate in Applied Sciences, 2) Associates in Arts and Associates in Science, and 3) General Studies. Since the General Studies program has been discontinued, graduates who were awarded a degree in this area were not included as part of this analysis. There were 182 graduates who were awarded an Associate in Applied Science and 162 graduates whom received either and Associate in Arts or Associate in Science.

For ease of comparison, responses to each item were coded as follows: No Progress = 0; Little Progress = 1; Some Progress = 2; and Considerable Progress = 3. Group means were calculated for each goal and appear in Table 6.

**Table 6**
**Progress on Goals Reported by Graduates by Degree Type**

| | Associate in Applied Science | Associate in Arts or Science |
|---|---|---|
| **General Education Goals** | **mean** | **mean** |
| Improved my oral communication skills | 2.35 | 2.41 |
| Improved my written communication skills | 2.48 | 2.58 |
| Improved my quantitative reasoning skills | 2.44 | 2.35 |
| Improved my scientific reasoning skills | 2.26 | 2.20 |
| Improved my ability to critically evaluate ideas | 2.41 | 2.33 |
| | | |
| **Affective Attribute Goals** | | |
| Developed an interest or openness to new ideas | 2.44 | 2.41 |
| Enhanced my ability to work as part of a group | 2.49 | 2.26 |
| Developed interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others | 2.45 | 2.38 |
| Enhanced my understanding of my own and different cultures | 2.40 | 2.34 |
| Improved my leadership abilities | 2.30 | 2.13 |
| Developed meaningful career goals | 2.49 | 2.33 |
| Enhanced my self-confidence | 2.45 | 2.39 |
| Improved my self-reliance | 2.46 | 2.35 |
| Improved my self-discipline | 2.48 | 2.33 |
| Improved my preparation for active participation in community activities | 2.09 | 1.90 |
| Preparation for continued personal and intellectual growth after college | 2.44 | 2.54 |
| Developed into a more informed citizen | 2.36 | 2.39 |
| | | |
| **Other Goals** | | |
| Improved my ability to use internet and online resources effectively | 2.03 | 2.01 |
| | | |
| Enhanced my ability to express myself artistically | 1.95 | 1.93 |

Overall, the two groups did not differ appreciably in terms of the progress made across the 19 goals. While recipients of degrees in the applied sciences made slightly more progress across 15 of the 19 goals than graduates who earned either a degree in the arts or sciences, the average progress made across all 19 goals was nearly identical for the two groups. The former group of graduates had an overall mean of 2.36 while the latter group's mean was 2.29.

Summary

Based on reports from recent graduates, it appears as though the College is effectively providing students with opportunities and experiences that support many aspects of its mission. Most of the graduates who responded to this survey benefited from their CCP enrollment in many ways. The general education skills and affective attributes that graduates hone while enrolled at the College have contributed to the positive employment and transfer outcomes many graduates experienced after leaving the College. These benefits are apparent regardless of the graduate's degree path.

While the information, taken as a whole, indicates that the College is effectively addressing its mission, there is room for improving effectiveness. Specifically, community involvement, effective use of the Internet, and artistic expression are aspects of the higher education experience with room for improvement.

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